

# The evolution of the Paralympic Games

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Published version deposited in CURVE March 2012

**Original citation & hyperlink:**

Brittain, I.S. (2008) 'The evolution of the Paralympic Games ' In Richard Cashman and Simon Darcy(Eds). *Benchmark Games: The Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games* (pp: 19-34). Petersham, New South Wales: Walla Walla Press.

[http://www.wallawallapress.com/benchmark\\_paralympics.php](http://www.wallawallapress.com/benchmark_paralympics.php)

ISSN: 9781876718053

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

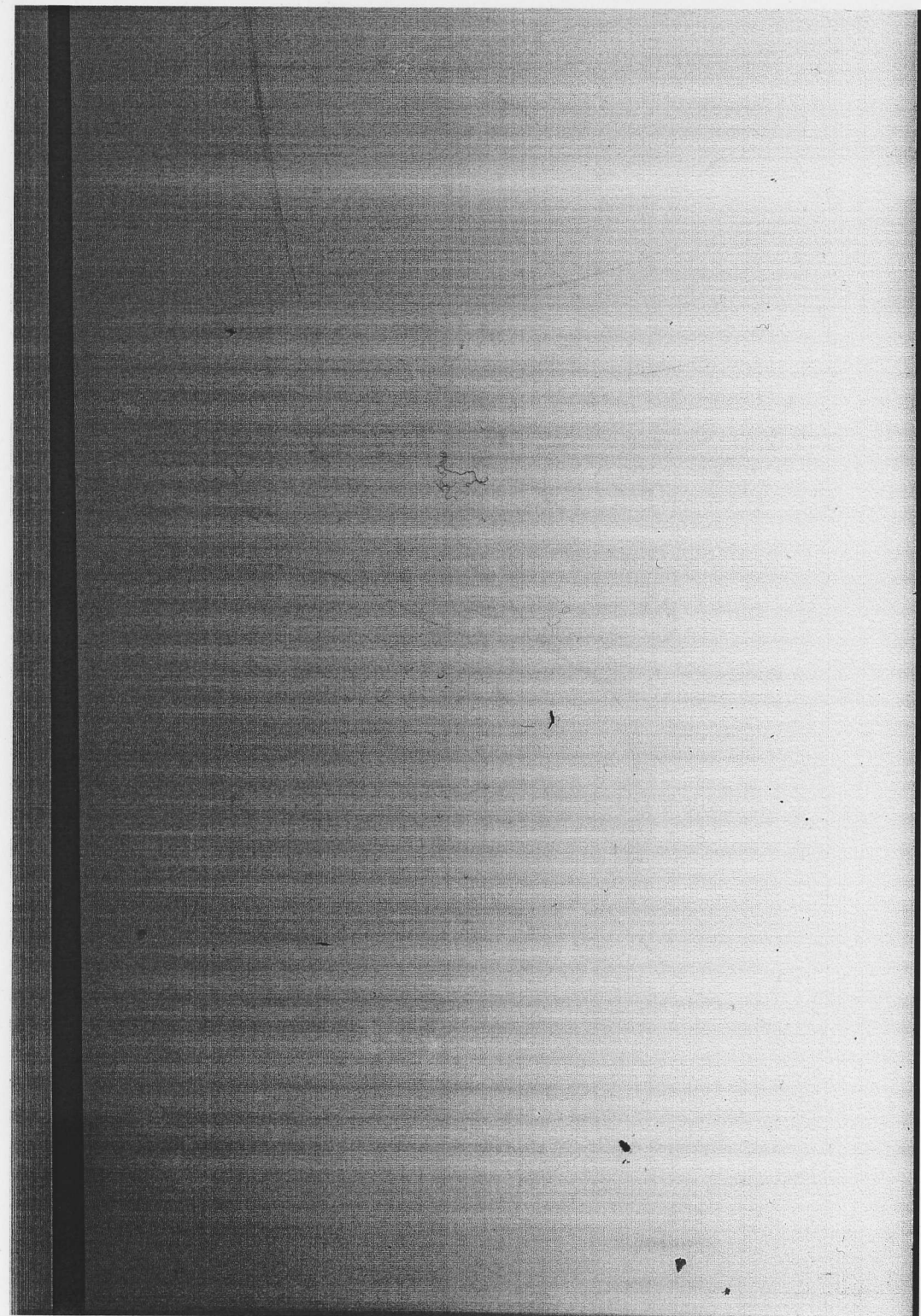
*Ian Brittain*

The wheelchair Games held in Rome in 1960 are now accepted as the first Paralympic Games, although at the time they were known as the Ninth International Stoke Mandeville Games. However, it took some decades for the Paralympic Games to establish both their name and their contemporary identity.

One of the intriguing issues about the Paralympic Games is how this small niche festival, which involved a minority of athletes on the margins, reinvented itself by establishing a connection to the premier multi-sport festival thus adopting the name 'Paralympic'. This became the recognised term denoting the disability sport equivalent of the Olympic Games. Dr Ludwig Guttman, the founder of the Paralympic movement, championed the Olympic connection over three decades. His persuasive advocacy was partially accepted initially, sometimes resisted and even challenged, but eventually prevailed so that the Paralympic-Olympic relationship changed from a more informal to a more formal one.

This chapter suggests that the Olympic acceptance of the Paralympic relationship occurred gradually after some Olympic individuals in high places provided an initial acceptance of Paralympic sport. However, it took some time for the IOC to recognise and deal with the implications of the Olympic branding of the Paralympics and to establish a preferred relationship.

This chapter will also show that the international media played a role in the promotion of the 'Paralympic' name, which they had been promoting from 1960. Guttman and the IOC would have preferred another name (see below). Why did the word Paralympics appeal to journalists? Probably it was shorter, sharper and more newsworthy than such terms as Paraplegic Olympics. The meaning of the word Paralympic changed over several decades. Initially it was a combination of paraplegic and Olympic but as more disability groups joined the movement it was necessary for the name to take on a new meaning.



## Birth of a movement (1944–1959)

Ludwig Guttmann was a German-Jewish neurologist who fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1939, eventually settling in England where he undertook work at Oxford University. He was appointed by the British Government in September 1943 as director of the National Spinal Injuries Unit at the Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury, to take care of the numerous soldiers and civilians suffering from war-time spinal injuries. Guttmann brought a new philosophy to the treatment of such patients and many of his colleagues were surprised by his enthusiasm for what they perceived as an utterly daunting task. 'They could not understand', commented Guttmann, 'how I could leave Oxford University to be engulfed in the hopeless and depressing task of looking after traumatic spinal paraplegics'.<sup>1</sup>

Before 1939, there is little evidence of organised efforts to develop sport for the disabled, especially those with spinal injuries. They were considered to have little hope of survival. Following the war, however, medical authorities were prompted to re-evaluate traditional methods of rehabilitation, which were not satisfactorily addressing the medical and psychological needs of the large number of soldiers disabled in combat.<sup>2</sup> According to McCann, Guttmann 'recognised the physiological and psychological values of sport in the rehabilitation of paraplegic hospital inpatients'.<sup>3</sup> His aim was to both instil a sense of self-worth in patients and to change the attitudes of society towards the spinally injured. He believed that his patients could become useful members of society and complete tasks that many able-bodied persons would find difficult.<sup>4</sup>

Guttmann's patients started a modest exercise program involving darts, snooker, punch-ball and skittles. Wheelchair polo was later added but because it was considered too rough it was replaced by wheelchair netball, later known as wheelchair basketball. Archery was the next sport added to the Stoke Mandeville program and became an important factor in rehabilitation. Guttmann believed that archery was 'of immense value in strengthening, in a very natural way, just those muscles of the upper limbs, shoulders and trunk, on which the paraplegic's well-balanced, upright position depends'.<sup>5</sup> Archery was also one of the few sports that paraplegics could compete on equal terms with their able-bodied counterparts, enabling teams from Stoke Mandeville to visit a number of able-bodied archery clubs in later years. This helped break down the barriers between the community and the patients and also meant that once discharged from

hospital, the paraplegic had access to society through a local archery club. Guttmann stated that 'these experiments were the beginning of a systematic development of competitive sport for the paralysed as an essential part of their medical rehabilitation and social re-integration in the community of a country like Great Britain where sport in one form or another plays such an essential part in the life of so many people'.<sup>6</sup>

## A modest beginning

The Paralympic Games began modestly as an archery demonstration between two teams of paraplegics from the Ministry of Pensions Hospital at Stoke Mandeville and the Star and Garter Home for Injured War Veterans at Richmond in Surrey. However, the date chosen for the event, 29 July 1948, was auspicious because it coincided with the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games, held just 35 miles away at Wembley. Given Guttmann's many later attempts to capitalise on the Olympic name, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the choice of this date was a conscious effort to gain as much publicity as possible for disabled sport at this time. The event attracted some notice in the local papers and even a short piece in *The Times*. Guttmann later stated that this event demonstrated that sport was not the exclusive preserve of the able-bodied.<sup>7</sup>

Guttmann's 'Grand Festival of Paraplegic Sport', as the second incarnation of the Games were described, was held on 27 July 1949. Because of the work of Guttmann and his staff and the enthusiasm of former Stoke Mandeville patients relocated to other spinal units around the country, the number of teams entered rose to seven. Thirty-seven individuals took part in these Games and with the exception of the archers from the Polish Hospital at Penley every competitor had, at some time, been a patient of Dr Guttmann.<sup>8</sup> 'Net-ball', a hybrid of netball and basketball played in wheelchairs and using netball posts for goals, was then added to the program. At the end of the day Guttmann gave a speech in which he made the now famous claim that the Stoke Mandeville Games would one day become recognised as the paraplegic's equivalent of the Olympic Games, leading to a headline in a local paper: "'Olympic Games" of Disabled Men is Born at Stoke'.<sup>9</sup>

Competitor numbers increased at the next three Games as more spinal units entered teams. Guttmann, however, had grander plans, aiming to make the Games international. The first step towards the realisation of Guttmann's dream occurred in 1952, when a team of four paraplegics from the Military Rehabilitation Centre, Aardenburg, in the Netherlands, attended



the Games. In his opening speech Guttman drew attention to the Helsinki Olympic Games, which were being held at the same time and added that he hoped that the paraplegic Games, as he called them, would become as international and as widely known as the Olympic Games.<sup>10</sup>

Over the next four years the international profile of the Stoke Mandeville Games rose dramatically; by 1956 athletes from 18 nations attended the Games and a total of 21 different nations had competed since 1952.<sup>11</sup> Some of the prizes were presented at the Games by Sir Arthur Porritt, who was a British IOC member and a surgeon like Guttman. Porritt stated that 'The spirit of these [Stoke Mandeville] Games goes beyond the Olympic Games spirit. You compete not only with skill and endurance but with courage and bravery too.' A few weeks later Porritt wrote to Otto Mayer, chancellor of the IOC, nominating the Games for the Fearnley Cup, which was awarded for 'meritorious achievement in the service of the Olympic Movement'.<sup>12</sup> Porritt was certain that Lord Burghley, the other British IOC member, would support his action. While Mayer was uncertain about the eligibility of the Stoke Mandeville Games for this Olympic award,<sup>13</sup> he submitted this nomination to the IOC session held at Melbourne in 1956. The members voted to award the Fearnley Cup to the Stoke Mandeville Games.

This was the first occasion when this cup had been awarded to any kind of disability sport organisation. The award of the Fearnley Cup encouraged Guttman to dream of bigger things. When referring to the Fearnley Cup in his opening speech at the 1957 Games he stated that 'I hope this is only the beginning of a closer connection between the Stoke Mandeville Games and the Olympic Games. In the past few years I have always emphasised that the Stoke Mandeville Games have become the equivalent of the Olympic Games.' Guttman added that he hoped that the next Olympic Games at Rome would have a separate section for paraplegics.<sup>14</sup>

## Promoting the cause

It is surprising that an event that began modestly in 1948 grew so rapidly in a decade and gained some IOC recognition.<sup>15</sup> There were probably five main reasons for this impressive growth.

In the early years much of the driving force for the growth appears to have been due to former patients of Dr Guttman's who were transferred to other spinal units and took what they had learned, and their enthusiasm for it, with them. Many of them returned year after year to take part in the Games.

Secondly, the first edition of *The Cord* was published in 1947. This

contained articles and advice to paraplegics and often gave space to reports on the sports activities at the hospital. Because practical information of assistance to paraplegics was in short supply, copies of this journal were often sent abroad, thereby spreading news of the Games and Guttman's rehabilitation methods. The journal continued to be published until 1983.

Guttman himself, thirdly, was a major player in promoting the Games. He would often travel abroad attending conferences, giving lectures and even providing evidence in court cases. He would invariably avail himself of every opportunity to promote the Games and the value of sport as a rehabilitative tool.

Fourthly, Guttman was very politically astute in promoting disabled sport. From the very first Games in 1948 he invited prominent political and social figures, and later added sports stars and celebrities to lift the profile of the Games to attract greater media attention. After securing the Fearnley Cup, Guttman invited Avery Brundage, the IOC president, and other IOC members to the 1957 Stoke Mandeville Games.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, Guttman continued to make comparisons between the Olympic Games and the Stoke Mandeville Games. The Olympic comparison had two benefits. It gave athletes with disabilities a greater sense of self-worth. It was also an effective tactic to attract media attention and to arouse public interest in the disabled games.

## Early usage of the term Paralympic

Guttman's constant Olympic-Paralympic comparison bore fruit in the media. As previously noted, a headline in the *Bucks Advertiser & Aylesbury News* on 29 July 1949 declared that "Olympic Games" Of Disabled Men is Born at Stoke'. The same newspaper referred to the 'Wheelchair Olympiad' on 3 August 1951, and after the Games attracted international competition in the following year, there was another headline on 1 August 1952: 'And Now The Wheel-Chair Olympics'. The *Bucks Advertiser & Aylesbury News* also provided the first known reference to the term 'Paralympic' (as distinct from Paralympiad) on 7 August 1953 when a front page on the Games stated that 'The Paralympics, started at Stoke Mandeville in 1948 with only 16 competitors, have this year become an event attracting world-wide interest'. On 14 August 1953 the same paper ran a headline 'Swimming—Latest Paralympic Game'.

It did not take long for this term to be used internationally. The USA-published *Paraplegia News* ran a story in November 1953 under

the headline 'Stoke Mandeville Paralympics'. The earliest written use of the term appeared in the summer issue of *The Cord* in 1951, when David Hinds, a paraplegic at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, wrote an article entitled 'Alice at the Paralympiad', which was a skit on Alice in Wonderland. However, none of these articles explain how the term came about. A possible clue comes from two articles in a special edition of *The Cord* celebrating ten years of the Spinal Unit in 1954. In one article, Dora T. Bell, the physiotherapist attached to the unit, referred to the 'Paraolympics of Stoke Mandeville' and in a second article Ward Sister Merchant referred to the 'Paraplegic Olympics'.<sup>17</sup> It would appear then that the term Paralympics began as an amalgamation of the words paraplegic and Olympics, which has been shortened further to the more newsworthy word, Paralympics. What is also clear from the increasing usage of the term Paralympic by the media during the 1950s is that it is used to refer to all the Games held annually from 1948 to 1959, as is reinforced by the heading in the *New York Times* of 21 August 1960 which stated 'US to send 24 Athletes to Rome for Annual "Paralympics" Event'.

With the disabled Games of 1960 taking place in the Olympic city of Rome in 1960—away from Stoke Mandeville and Great Britain—the meaning and usage of the term was about to change and become even more specific. However, it took more than two decades for what became the four-year disabled summer festival (with the addition of a winter festival in 1976) to be known solely as the Paralympic Games.

## The first Paralympic Games

Guttmann's persistence in forging a link between the Stoke Mandeville Games and the Olympic Games took a giant leap forward at the annual meeting of the World Veterans Federation in Rome in May 1959. Following discussions with various individuals from the Istituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro and Dr Maglio of the Spinal Unit in Rome, it was agreed to host the 1960 Games in the Olympic city of Rome a few weeks after the Olympic Games. While these Games are now regarded as the first Paralympic Games, Guttmann still preferred the title of the (9th) International Stoke Mandeville Games. Labanowich believed that Guttmann was keen to retain the Stoke Mandeville connection in the emerging international games.<sup>18</sup> However, Scruton claims that Guttmann regarded the athletes as having truly Olympic stature and that the Games

were worthy of the title 'Olympics of the Paralysed', a title which would come to greater prominence in 1976. A note in the minutes of the ISMGC committee in 1965 seemed to support the Labanowich rather than the Scruton view. Guttmann then noted that 'it was only fair, as with the Olympic Games, [that] the name of their Games remain the Stoke Mandeville Games out of respect for the place and the country in which they were founded'.<sup>19</sup>

While the minutes of the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee confirm Guttmann's stance, he was not the only critic of the Paralympic label. According to the same minutes, the IOC also 'raised the strongest objections to the use of the word "Paralympics"'.<sup>20</sup> However, the international press ignored such views and continued to refer to the Rome Games as the 'Paralympics'.<sup>21</sup>

With Tokyo chosen to host the 1964 Olympic Games, efforts were made to again stage the Stoke Mandeville Games in this Olympic city. This deliberate linking of the Stoke Mandeville Games with the host city of the Olympic Games on a second occasion added more layers to the meaning of the Stoke Mandeville Games and the Paralympics. The term 'Paralympic'—as a contraction of the 'Paraplegic Olympics'—became much more specific and referred to the edition of the International Stoke Mandeville Games held in the Olympic year. The *Bucks Advertiser & Aylesbury News*, which was the first paper to use the term Paralympic in 1953, recognised this distinction. It described the Games at Stoke Mandeville in non-Olympic years (from 1961 to 1963) as the International Stoke Mandeville Games.<sup>22</sup>

However, there were as many as three separate names for the 1964 Paralympic Games:

1. The International Stoke Mandeville Games—Guttmann's preferred option.
2. The Tokyo Games for the Physically Handicapped
3. The Paralympics

In contrast to Guttmann, the majority of the world's press continued to prefer the title Paralympics, as did the Japanese organisers, who were not persuaded by Guttmann, even though he was a member of the organising committee.

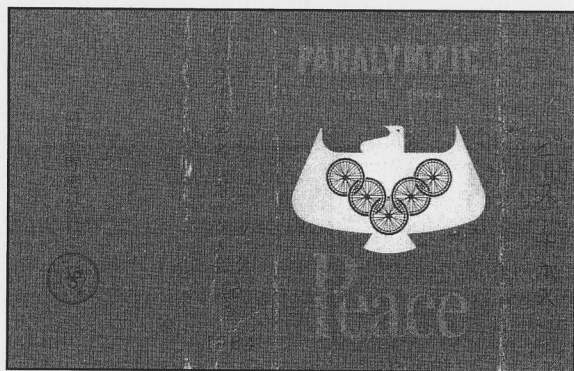
The organising committee solved this problem by including more than one name on Games publicity. However, the term Paralympic is larger and more prominent than the term International Stoke Mandeville Games in the 1964 Games poster. The organisers produced three different pamphlets that

were identical except for the name of the Games.<sup>23</sup> The Peace Corporation, which developed a range of Olympic advertising, produced a cigarette packet that was headed with the word 'Paralympic'. The Tokyo Games logo featured the Paralympic heading and consisted of a dove of peace with five interlocking wheels. The usual International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) logo, by contrast, featured three interlocking wheelchair wheels representing friendship, unity and sportsmanship. This may have been an attempt to replicate the five Olympic rings.

Dr Leonardo Ruiz from the *Instituto Mexicano de Rehabilitacion* was part of an observation team that attended the 1964 Tokyo Games to explore the possibility of staging the 1968 Paralympic Games in the same place, Mexico City, as the next Olympic Games. While there was promising initial progress towards this goal, the Mexico City organising committee by 1966 opted out of hosting the Paralympics due to financial constraints and access problems with facilities.<sup>24</sup>

Following offers from New York (USA) and Tel Aviv (Israel) it was decided that the 1968 Games would be held in Israel. Although the Tel Aviv organising committee did not feature the name Paralympics, media and disability groups continued to refer to the Paralympic Games.<sup>25</sup>

Efforts were again made to stage the 1972 Paralympics in the Olympic city of Munich.



In a 1964 Games poster, the word 'Paralympic' was far more prominent and larger than the 'International Stoke Mandeville Games'. The word 'Paralympic' also featured in a cigarette packet produced by the Peace Corporation for the 1964 Tokyo Games. The symbol of five interlocking wheels was appropriate since all the athletes performed in wheelchairs (Ian Brittain).

The Olympic organising committee declined to do so on the grounds that the Olympic village was to be converted into housing immediately after the Games, causing a problem with the accommodation of Paralympic athletes.<sup>26</sup> The University of Heidelberg, in Germany, proved an attractive alternative. The Games were again billed as the International Stoke Mandeville Games by the organising committee, but the press continued to refer to the Games as the Paralympics. The buses that were used to transport athletes at the Games had 'Paralympics-1972' boldly displayed in the destination panel.<sup>27</sup>

## Development of sport for other disability groups

Organisations for some other disability groups, such as the vision impaired and amputee athletes, had emerged by 1960. Recognising the need to organise international sports for disability groups other than paraplegics, the International Working Group on Sports for the Disabled was set up in 1960 under the aegis of the World Veterans Federation, whose headquarters were in Paris. Unfortunately, the organisation was dissolved in 1964 due to language and other differences. The International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) was founded in its place at a meeting in Paris in 1964.<sup>28</sup> ISOD remained under the patronage of the World Veterans Federation until 1967, when it became an independent organisation with its headquarters transferred to Stoke Mandeville. In the same year, the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association organised the first international sports competition for amputees at Stoke Mandeville. Guttman, now Sir Ludwig Guttman, after being knighted for services to the disabled in 1966, became president of both ISMGF and ISOD. He used this dual role to help bring the different disability groups together in the same Games.

Initially ISOD represented a number of disability groups, but by 1981 both the blind and the cerebral palsied had broken away to form their own international federations. In 2004 ISOD, then representing amputees and les autres, merged with the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF) to form the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS).<sup>29</sup> ISOD and ISMGF cooperated in the organisation of the Paralympic Summer Games in Toronto in 1976 and Arnhem in 1980.



## The use of Olympic terminology

Montreal, Canada, was chosen to host the 1976 Olympic Games, but once again the Paralympics were not held in the Olympic city. Two other disability groups—amputees and visually impaired—joined the next Summer Games which were held in Toronto, Canada, thus transforming the Paralympics into a multi-disability event, which in turn affected the evolving terminology used to describe the Games. With the inclusion of other disability groups in the Games it was no longer appropriate to refer to them as the International Stoke Mandeville Games or the Paralympic Games, in the sense of the Paraplegic Olympics. The committees of ISMGF and ISOD resolved to call the Toronto Games the 'Olympiad for the Physically Disabled', which the organisers shortened to the 'Torontolympiad'. Earlier that year ISOD had staged the first Paralympic Winter Games in Ornsköldsvik, Sweden for amputee and visually impaired athletes. ISOD chose to call the Winter Games at Ornsköldsvik the 'Winter Olympics for the Disabled'. For the first time the medals of the Games no longer bore the name International Stoke Mandeville Games (see below).

The Paralympic use of the term 'Olympiad' was first drawn to the attention of the IOC by the International Ski Federation in September 1975.<sup>30</sup> The secretary general of this Federation wrote that Bengt Hollen, head of the organising committee for the disabled Winter Games, claimed that Guttman had been given the right verbally to use the term 'Olympic Games' for Stoke Mandeville competitions. Madame Berlioux then wrote to Guttman on behalf of the IOC making it clear that no such verbal or written authority had been provided. She asked Guttman to ensure that both the ISMGF and ISOD would refrain from using such terms.<sup>31</sup> Six days later, IOC president Lord Killanin sent Madame Berlioux a memo requesting her to set up a meeting with Guttman. Killanin added that it was advisable 'in the interests of both the Olympic Movement and humanity ... for the IOC to encourage such activities provided the situation is absolutely clear'.<sup>32</sup>

Disappointed by the stance of the IOC, Guttman went on the offensive and penned a three-page reply outlining why he believed that the disability sports movement was entitled to use Olympic terminology and would continue to use it. His arguments can be summarised as follows:

- Guttman clearly considered the IOC had recognised the ISMGF as an 'Olympic Organisation' when it awarded it the Fearnley Cup in 1956.

- He further claimed that the disabled games were the real Olympics because they adhered more closely to the ideals of the founder Pierre de Coubertin.
- The term 'Olympic' or 'Olympics', he added, could be found in the London telephone directory and applied to a wide variety of services including cleaners and hair salons.
- Guttman made it clear, finally, that until the IOC included Games for the disabled within the Olympic Games, the disabled sports movement would continue to call their Games 'Olympics'.<sup>33</sup>

Three weeks later Guttman received a response from Berlioux, claiming that there had obviously been a misunderstanding with regard to the relationship between the IOC and ISMGF. She stated that the IOC was anxious to provide patronage to ISMGF and requested that a meeting be arranged with Lord Killanin.<sup>34</sup> A meeting between Sir Ludwig and Lord Killanin took place over the Christmas period that year. The outcome of the meeting appears to have been that the IOC would give assistance and patronage to the disability sports movement, providing it would desist from using Olympic terminology after the Toronto Games. Killanin agreed in principle to press for IOC recognition of ISMGF at the IOC session in Innsbruck.<sup>35</sup>

Killanin again wrote to Guttman in March to confirm that the IOC Executive Board had agreed to recognise the ISMGF 'in principle' providing this body refrained from the use of Olympic terminology after Toronto. This would occur after a final check to ensure that all ISMGF rules were 'fully in compliance with the Rules, Regulations and Principles of the IOC'.<sup>36</sup> The technical director of the IOC wrote to Guttman in May with a series of questions, which were answered promptly.<sup>37</sup> After Guttman sent Berlioux and Killanin a report of the Games in Toronto, there was limited communication between the IOC and Guttman until early 1978.

Despite concerted efforts by Guttman, he failed to persuade the Russians to host the 1980 Paralympic Games, and so at a joint meeting of ISMGF and ISOD in July 1977 it was decided that Arnhem, in the Netherlands, should host them. It was also agreed that the Winter Games should be held in Geilo, Norway and be organised as a joint ISMGF-ISOD operation as paraplegics would take part.<sup>38</sup> It was proposed to refer to the Arnhem Games as the Olympics for the Disabled 1980 and the Geilo Games as the 2nd Winter Olympics for the Disabled.

After the IOC became aware of the proposed titles for the Games,

Berlioux again wrote to Guttmann in February 1978 about the use of Olympic terminology. Guttmann responded by stating that he was still awaiting written confirmation of the IOC decision to recognise ISMGF. Throughout the remainder of 1978 correspondence flowed backwards and forwards between Berlioux and Guttmann in order to find a solution to the problem to enable IOC patronage of the ISMGF.

However, a number of new political issues surfaced that made decision-making difficult. One concern was that the USOC had licensed the Special Olympics organisation in the USA to call itself by that name.<sup>39</sup> This came to light when the Special Olympics Organisation made an application to join ISOD in 1978. In addition, the IOC preferred to recognise just one organisation that would represent the entire disabled sports movement despite the fact that ISOD and ISMGF were two separate entities, with a common president in Guttmann. Finally, South Africa was a full member of both ISOD and ISMGF and competed with a totally racially integrated team. However, the IOC had banned South Africa from Olympic competition and did not want to recognise an organisation that allowed South African participation.<sup>40</sup>

In the autumn of 1979, Sir Ludwig suffered a coronary thrombosis and died in March 1980. News of his death was obviously slow to reach the IOC as Killanin sent an internal memo to Berlioux in late March 1980 noting that he had not heard from Guttmann for some time and assuming that this must have been because of his old age. Killanin ended the memo by stating that nevertheless 'the correct thing would be that (a) these Games should not take place in the Olympic country (b) they should not be called the Olympic Games but whatever games they like, under the patronage of the I.O.C.'<sup>41</sup> After the death of Guttmann, the attitude of the IOC seemed to harden. Madame Berlioux wrote to Mr Idenburg, president of the Netherlands Olympic Committee in May 1980 asking him if anything could be done under Dutch law to stop the use of the title 'Olympics for the Disabled'. Then, rather bizarrely, considering the Games finished on 5 July she wrote to Henrik Meijers, managing director of the Sports Division for the Games on 17 October, asking if it was not too late for him to drop the word 'Olympics'. She concluded by indicating the possibility of litigation.<sup>42</sup> The 1980 Games medal indicates that the title of 'Olympics for the Disabled' was used (see below).

Los Angeles was selected as the host of the 1984 Olympic Games. There is no evidence that either ISMGF or ISOD made any attempt to stage the Paralympics in Los Angeles. Following a bid by Ben Lipton, chairman of the



*The word 'Olympiad' featured in two different ways in the medal for the 1976 Toronto Games (left): 'Torontolympiad' and 'Olympiad For The Physically Disabled'. The words 'Olympics for the Disabled' featured in the 1980 Arnhem Games (right) despite the IOC continuing to have reservations about such branding (Ian Brittain).*

US National Wheelchair Athletic Association in 1980, America was selected as the host country. These Games were, however, to be split into ISMGF Games, to be organised by NWAA, and ISOD Games, to be organised by ISOD at a separate venue at around the same time. In October 1980 Lipton issued a position paper stating the reasons for NWAA's decision to hold separate games.<sup>43</sup> With the acceptance of this decision, the possibility was now open for NWAA to resurrect the use of the term 'Paralympic' and for the first time to officially attach it to the ISMGF Games, which would be just for paraplegics. The Games were set to take place at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in July, with the ISOD 'International Games for the Disabled' taking place in Nassau County, New York in June.

From the very beginning the organising committee called itself the 1984 Paralympics Steering Committee and used a logo of three intertwined circles, deriving from the three wheelchair wheels that had been used by ISMGF for several decades. The USOC took exception to both the name and the three-ringed logo claiming that they 'may tend to cause confusion with the Olympic Games'.<sup>44</sup> Responding to the USOC objections, Dr Robert Jackson, the new president of ISMGF, wrote to IOC President Samaranch in 1983 requesting that the IOC approve both the name and logo. Samaranch responded by saying that the IOC saw no objection to the request, but that final responsibility lay with USOC.<sup>45</sup>



Due to major problems, mainly fundraising, the Summer Paralympic Games, scheduled to be staged at the University of Illinois in 1984, were scrapped in March 1984. At very short notice the British Paraplegic Sports Society agreed to organise the Games at Stoke Mandeville. Despite the short time frame, the Games went ahead under the title 'VII World Wheelchair Games—Paralympics, UK 1984' (see below). Scruton claims that this was the first time the term 'Paralympics' was used with the full approval of the IOC.<sup>46</sup> It is also unclear whether permission to use the term was sought from the British Olympic Association. Nevertheless, at a meeting of the International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) (see below) in the Netherlands in February 1985, it was agreed that the term 'Paralympic Games' be used for ICC Games, summer and winter, held in Olympic years.<sup>47</sup> However, given that these would be multi-disability Games, this use of the term 'Paralympic' was altered from the original 'Paraplegic Olympics' to 'Parallel Olympics' meaning alongside or level with.

## Relations with the IOC

This apparent thawing of attitudes within the IOC towards the use of the term Paralympic came about following a number of meetings and events that assisted in a closer working relationship between the IOC and the disability sports movement. In 1981, both the International Blind Sport Association (IBSA) and the Cerebral Palsied-International Sports and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA) broke away from ISOD to become independent bodies. However, at a meeting in Leysin, Switzerland, in March 1982, the four international bodies (ISMGE, ISOD, IBSA, CP-ISRA) joined together to form the ICC.<sup>48</sup> While remaining independent in terms of the development of their own disability groups, the four organisations used ICC to better co-ordinate the major games for athletes with a disability. This also provided the opportunity for one single body to relate to the IOC as a representative of the disabled groups that participated in the contentiously named Olympics for the Disabled.

A meeting took place between ICC and the IOC in February 1983, at which President Samaranch made it clear that the IOC wished the disabled sports movement to become part of the Olympic movement. In return for the removal of Olympic terminology from their events, he added that he was willing to offer the disabled sports movement both IOC patronage and financial assistance.<sup>49</sup> A major result of this meeting was an agreement by the IOC that a demonstration disabled skiing event

could take place at the Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games in 1984 and, if successful, a demonstration event might also be added to the Los Angeles Summer Games. This was confirmed at a meeting of the IOC Executive Board in early summer of 1983.<sup>50</sup>

Earlier, in late 1982, the IOC had shown a willingness to work closely with the disabled sports movement when its Executive Board meeting in October 1982 agreed to allow the use of the Olympic rings in the logo for what were called the 1984 World Winter Games for the Disabled. This had been granted on the understanding that the term 'Olympic' would be dropped from ISOD's preferred title of '3rd Winter Olympic Games for the Disabled'.<sup>51</sup> Samaranch also agreed to attend the Games in person. This was to be the start of a much closer working relationship between the IOC and the disability sports movement.

The closer working relationship between ICC and the IOC paved the way for much closer links between the Olympic and the disability sports movements, culminating in the staging of the 1988 Paralympic Games in the Olympic city of Seoul. This pattern has been repeated at every summer and



The dual branding of the Paralympic Games continued at the 1984 Stoke Mandeville Games: a medal declared that it was the VII World Wheelchair Games but it was also referred to as Paralympics UK 1984—the first time the word Paralympic was officially associated with the Games. A poster for the third Winter Games, at Innsbruck, used both the Olympic rings (at the top) and a 'broken' Paralympic version of the rings below (Ian Brittain).

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winter games since then. A strong co-operative working relationship now exists between the two movements (see Chapter 12), which I am certain would make the founder of the International Stoke Mandeville Games a very happy and proud man.

### Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that Guttman went out of his way from the outset to draw clear links and parallels between his fledgling disability sports movement and the Olympic Games. He was more than willing to claim the high moral ground, asserting, as he did in the mid-1970s, that the disabled games were the real Olympics because they adhered more closely to the ideals of the founder Pierre de Coubertin. To link disabled sport with the Olympic Games was a shrewd tactic which also gave disabled athletes a greater sense of purpose and self-worth. It also seems likely that Guttman envisaged a close relationship between the disabled and the Olympic Games, in one form or another. He advocated a place for athletes with a disability in the Olympic Games as early as 1957. Guttman succeeded admirably in realising his aims. While the groundwork for a close association was laid by 1980, the two festivals have moved even closer since his death. Guttman's view has been vindicated in that the Olympic association has enhanced the festival.

It is also interesting to note the changing meaning and connotation of the term Paralympic over time and the politics, issues and personalities involved in its evolution and eventual acceptance. It has gone from denoting simply an annual paraplegic sports competition to denoting an international quadrennial one and to eventually becoming synonymous with the largest multi-disability sports event and second largest sports event of its kind in the world today. The meaning of Paralympic also changed from paraplegic Olympic to a parallel event to the Olympic Games.

It seems less clear why the Olympic movement accepted the relationship with the Paralympic movement. There was some obvious reluctance in the 1970s to extend Olympic branding to this parallel event. One suspects, ultimately, that the decision may have been influenced by two factors. By supporting the Paralympics, the IOC enhanced its moral leadership of the international sports community. The Paralympics also bolstered the Olympic ideology of Olympism, with its emphasis on non-discrimination and accessibility of all to sports participation.